

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 12

By Finney R.

A RESOLUTION to honor the Bicentennial Celebration of the founding of Gatlinburg, Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause in its deliberations to join with the cities and counties that comprise this great State in celebrating joyous and historic occasions; and

WHEREAS, the beautifully scenic City of Gatlinburg and its citizens are most assuredly deserving of special recognition, as they celebrate this year the bicentennial anniversary of its founding; and

WHEREAS, Gatlinburg was founded in 1807 when Martha Jane Huskey Ogle, her children, and other family members arrived from North Carolina to this remote area of the Great Smoky Mountains in eastern Tennessee to honor the deathbed wish of her recently deceased husband, William Ogle, to have his family settle in the “land of Paradise” he had found for them; and

WHEREAS, William Ogle had traveled to eastern Tennessee around 1802, claiming a home site for his family in the beautiful, untamed land located in a valley of the West Fork of the Little Pigeon River, surrounded on three sides by majestic mountains and filled with abundant, massive white oak trees; and

WHEREAS, although he died of the black plague before returning to settle his homestead, William Ogle’s widow, children, and other family members made the arduous journey over the mountains to find the land claimed by William, including the logs he had hand hewn and left to season for their cabin, a Gatlinburg landmark which still stands to this day; and

WHEREAS, the roll of early area settlers include familiar surnames of present day local families – Ogle, McCarter, Reagan, Whaley, and Trentham - as the beautiful area was settled and first became known as the White Oak Flats community; and

WHEREAS, the small hamlet was renamed “Gatlinburg” by the United States Post Office after a local general store established in 1854 by Radford C. Gatlin. A controversial fellow and flamboyant preacher with his own “Gatlinite” Baptist Church, Mr. Gatlin, a Democrat, was run out of town by his Republican neighbors in 1856; and

WHEREAS, a self-sustaining community during its early years, Gatlinburg had little contact with the outside world prior to the Civil War, when some locals joined the Confederacy and some the Union, but most remained neutral; and

WHEREAS, raided numerous times to commandeer supplies for soldiers and horses, Gatlinburg saw only one skirmish but suffered great privation after the Civil War, as did most of the South and especially Southern Appalachia; and

WHEREAS, education in Gatlinburg in the early 1800s was limited to subscription schools, where parents paid for a child’s education; in 1912 the first public settlement school was established by the Pi Beta Phi Fraternity, providing both academic and practical education; and

WHEREAS, in 1945, Pi Beta Phi Fraternity partnered with the University of Tennessee to form the Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts in Gatlinburg, which presently is renowned for its education excellence in the field of arts and crafts; and

WHEREAS, the majestic beauty of the Smoky Mountains is truly an American treasure and, in the early decades of the last century, a dream was born to establish a national park, straddling the Tennessee and North Carolina borders, extending to Gatlinburg. This dream was fulfilled in 1940 with the dedication of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park; and

WHEREAS, as a result of creating the park, mountain families were displaced by purchase of their lands for the park, and a large number moved to nearby Gatlinburg. Others would soon follow, namely the first trickle of tourists, who visited the magnificent park and were eager to relax in the small resort town which quickly won renown for making visitors feel welcome; and

WHEREAS, today, Gatlinburg still possesses its pioneering spirit, leading the way in applying the industry and hospitality of its people and the God-given beauty of its mountainous

surroundings to become the most-visited treasure in the United States and one of Tennessee's premier sources of income from visitors; and

WHEREAS, proud of its history and heritage, Gatlinburg is well-represented on the Tennessee Heritage Trail, recently developed by the State of Tennessee, which highlights our cultural heritage with numerous Gatlinburg area locations designated as integral stops along the Trail; and

WHEREAS, throughout 2007, the Gatlinburg Chamber of Commerce and City of Gatlinburg will hold a year-long bicentennial celebration of its past, its present, and its future, showcasing Gatlinburg's uniquely American heritage and pioneer spirit, its wonderful blend of unsurpassed amenities and hospitality amidst ethereal mountains and resplendent nature, and the deeply held love of the area and boundless energy and spirit of its people, passed down from each generation to the next; and

WHEREAS, the State of Tennessee takes great pride in the accomplishments of the City of Gatlinburg and its citizens, and is grateful for the positive impact Gatlinburg has on the State's tourist economy and the special place it has won in the hearts of millions of Americans as the gateway to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park; and

WHEREAS, the City of Gatlinburg is one of the great municipalities in Tennessee and it is most appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor this fine community and its citizenry as they commemorate this significant milestone in their historic existence; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and congratulate the citizens of the City of Gatlinburg upon the celebration of the City's bicentennial and extend to them our best wishes for continued success, growth, and prosperity in their outstanding community, a true Tennessee treasure.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.